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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
JANUARY 6-7, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 6-7, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. ANTI-WAR STATEMENTS

Evrensel(01/06) reported that the Kahramanmaraş chapter of the State Employees' Union Confederation (KESK) issued an anti-war press release calling for opposition to war. Akif Ekici of the Gaziantep Organized Industrial Zone said a new intervention in Iraq would result in such negative effects as market losses and decreases in employment and production. Evrensel (01/07) quoted State Employees' Union Confederation (KESK) Mersin Chapters Platform Term Spokesperson Recep Kara as voicing opposition to involvement in a war that had nothing to do with Turkish people. The presidents of the Mersin Genel-Is labor union and Egitim-Sen teachers union opposed war, as it would bring nothing but suffering and tears. The Egitim-Sen secretary general called on laborers for active

SIPDIS

opposition to war. The Turkish Union of Architects and Engineers Chambers (TMMOB) Van Provincial Coordination Council President indicated a possible war in Iraq would bring destruction to all the people in the Middle East.

3. SIRNAK RESIDENTS STOCKPILING FLOUR

(Sabah) Residents of Sirnak's Silopi township have been rushing to flourmills in an effort to stockpile sacks of flour prior to the possible U.S. operation against Iraq. Six flourmills in the province are not able to meet the demand, while eight trailer trucks affiliated with the Turkish Red Crescent Society are reported to have unloaded materials in Silopi. "Although we have a daily capacity of 125-175 sacks, we cannot keep up with the demand," said a local miller. Evrensel (01/07) quoted Silopi merchants as wanting "investments, not war" in the region.

4. SIRNAK RESIDENTS CONCERNED OVER LANDMINES AND WAR

(Cumhuriyet) Landmines planted as part of the fight against the PKK in Silopi's (Sirnak) Ova village, which is on the Iraqi border, killed three people and damaged four tractors in 2001. In the same year, other ammunition such as mortar shells and hand grenades also caused the death of 19 people and the injury of 34 others in the region. War preparations along the Iraqi border have led to increased concerns on the part of Southeastern people that they might return to dark days again. Evrensel reported a four-fold increase in rental prices as a result of reports stating that U.S. soldiers would come to the district.

5. SYRIA HANDS OVER PKK MEMBER

(Cumhuriyet/Turkiye/Evrensel) Syria handed over to Turkey a KADEK (PKK) member determined to have participated in armed activities in rural Mardin on behalf of KADEK. Also, Mardin police arrested four people who had come from Sanliurfa to join KADEK. The four arrestees reportedly admitted having traveled to join KADEK.

6. "TRICKY TRIAL FOR USE OF KURDISH"

(Evrensel) Attorney Sedat Yurttas of the Diyarbakir Bar Association claimed the State was trickily opening cases for "membership in an

illegal organization (i.e., KADEK/PKK)" or "assisting and abetting an illegal organization (KADEK)" instead of directly opening cases against the use of Kurdish language and culture. Attorneys alleged such cases de facto violated EU Harmonization Laws.

17. MALATYA SUPPORT FOR DIYARBAKIR PETITION DRIVE (Evrensel) Malatya's Inonu University students issued a January 5 press release in front of the province's post office in support of the "I Want My University Initiative" campaign launched by Dicle University (Diyarbakir) students. The students called for reforming the structure of the Higher Education Council (YOK), which they characterized as a product of the "September 12" military regime and an obstacle to science and free thought in universities. They carried "No to YOK," "Free of charge, Scientific and Democratic Education," "Budget to Education, Not War" and "No to YOK Bill" banners and shouted anti-YOK slogans.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

18. DELAY IN RE-OPENING OF ADANA AIRPORT DRAWS CRITICISM (Bolge) Residents of Adana criticized a delay in completion of the repair project at the Adana Airport, which was closed by the State Airports Administration (DHMI) to flights on November 4. Residents described the airport's closure for repair during winter conditions as "an example of irresponsibility." DHMI officials had previously announced they would try to complete the repair project and re-open the airport by mid-January. Muslim pilgrim candidates, however, complained they were not being given a definite date on which they could fly to Saudi Arabia, as it is not known when the airport would resume operation.

19. EIGHTY-NINE PER CENT OF PLOTS AT ADANA'S OIZ SOLD (Bolge) Umit Ozgumus, President of the Adana Chamber of Industry and Vice President of the Adana Haci Sabanci Organized Industrial Zone, said that 89% (7,075,858 square meters) of the zone's plots had been sold. The zone is reported to be one of Turkey's largest organized industrial zones. Ozgumus indicated that 167 firms were currently operational in the zone, while he expects construction projects for another 85 firms to be completed soon. Another 109 firms are at the project stage. The zone houses 24 different sectors, providing employment for 13,000 people.

110. MORE TOURISTS VISIT GAZIANTEP MUSEUMS IN 2002 (Milli Gazete/Bolge) The number of domestic and foreign tourists visiting Gaziantep museums increased 141.7% in 2002, rising to 45,933 people, compared to 19,000 visitors in 2001. The increase was attributed to the display in these museums of mythological mosaics unearthed during excavations in the ancient city of Zeugma, which was partly submerged by water from Sanliurfa's Birecik Dam.

111. TRUCKER PROTEST ENDS (Turkiye/Milli Gazete/Evrensel) A demonstration staged by a group of truckers carrying fuel oil from (northern) Iraq to the Turkish Petroleum International Corporation (TPIC) Batman Installations in protest of non-receipt of money after waiting over three days in lines in order to unload their cargoes ended on January 4. Following an agreement between the truckers and the contracting firm that foresees that truckers will receive a payment of TL 15 million (approx. USD 9) per day after a three-day waiting period, truckers began to unload their cargoes. Currently, 1,700 truckers are reported to be waiting in line in front of the TPIC Batman Installations. Iskender Iskenderoglu of the contracting firm said that access from the Habur (Sirnak) border gate had been suspended until the lines disappear.

112. SOUTHEASTERN EXPORTS DOWN OVER 8% IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS (Bolge) According to the Southeastern Anatolia Exporters' Union, agricultural, animal-based, and

industrial product exports from the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) region to 118 countries and eleven free zones in Turkey decreased 8.3% in January-November 2002, falling to USD 542.8 million from USD 591.4 million for the same period in 2001. In the same period, USD 388,038 million of textile, USD 61.5 million of grain, beans and seed products, USD 60.3 million dried fruits, USD 19.8 million of industrial products and USD 13.2 million of animals and animal-based products were exported from the region. Eighty-two per cent of the exports were from Gaziantep, with main export items being machine-made carpets, synthetic yarns and synthetic textiles. Major customers included Italy, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

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